

### **The Great Fire of 1830**

Although Gloucester bought its first fire engines in 1793, it took "The Great Fire of 1830" to awaken people to the necessity of greater fire protection.

On Thursday, September 16, 1830, a house owned and occupied by Mr. Samuel Gilbert on the western end of Front Street (now Main Street) caught fire. At least 27 dwelling houses and 43 stores and workshops, most with their contents, were entirely destroyed from the town landing to Porter Street. Following this fire, the citizens of the town voted to purchase one of the newer type engines. This engine pumped water from the well or cistern, through a hose, to the hand tub where the men then pumped the water onto the fire. The new engine was appropriately called the Hydraylion, and wherever it was used, the hose line replaced the buckets.

This fire also resulted in the forming of the first Hook, Ladder and Axe Company. Before this, the ladders had been placed in boxes, which were located in different sections of the town. The early ladder trucks were called fire escapes.